



South Dakota Department of the Military South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs



SECRETARY SHULKIN DELIVERS HIS FIRST STATE OF THE VA ADDRESS

United States Secretary of Veterans Affairs Dr. David Shulkin delivered his first "State of the VA" address this week, highlighting the activity and direction of the agency since his appointment in February. In his address, Secretary Shulkin stated that he wanted to update veterans on the progress the agency is making while also acknowledging the shortcomings that the VA has identified and will address in the upcoming months.

"As a physician, I tend to look at things in terms of the way I was trained—assess, diagnose, and then aggressively treat the patient. Though we are taking immediate and decisive steps, we are still in critical condition and require intensive care," said Dr. Shulkin.

The address covered a wide spectrum of issues within the VA, including Access to Care, Community Care and Choice, Accountability, and the quality of care provided to veterans. Dr. Shulkin identified multiple priorities, such as reducing backlogs and getting more veterans access to mental health care and suicide prevention programs.

Addressing improvements in accountability and the VA administration, Dr. Shulkin stated that while he was able to initiate the Executive Order establishing the Accountability and Whistleblower Protection signed by President Trump, "further legislation is needed and needed now."

The goal, the Secretary said, is to "turn the VA into the organization veterans and their families deserve, and one that America can take pride in."

A fact sheet highlighting some of the elements of Dr. Shulkin's address as well as the text of his address can be found at:

http://www.blogs.va.gov/VAntage/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/StateofVA_FactSheet_5-31-2017.pdf

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SD GUARD WINS GOLD IN ARMY COMMUNITIES OF EXCELLENCE AWARDS

The 2017 Army Communities of Excellence Awards (ACOE) presented the South Dakota Army National Guard with a gold recipient award at the Pentagon, May 24.

The ACOE Awards recognize top performance within U.S. Army, National Guard and Reserve installations/communities and their approach to systems management.

"This award is proof positive that the South Dakota Army National Guard is a world class organization," said Maj. Gen. Tim Reisch, adjutant general of the SDNG. "Every one of our soldiers should take great pride in the part they played in helping to achieve this milestone."

The ACOE Awards follow a 12-month evaluation and score using the Malcolm Baldrige criteria for performance excellence.

ACOE Awards score participants on how well they demonstrate maturity of key organizational processes and their ability to show results in areas such as leadership, strategic planning, customer focus, work force management and operational effectiveness.

After placing as runner-up last year, Reisch said the goal was to take lessons learned and apply them to this year's competition.

This competition is about readiness," said Reisch. "If you apply the principles and put them into practice, you'll learn that the investment has been very well placed."

By using criteria established for the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award as a framework for performance assessment, the ACOE program helps participating Army installations/communities focus on providing excellence in facilities and services in support of soldiers, their families and civilians.

Baldrige-based performance assessments provide opportunities to identify best practices in installation management and reveal potential opportunities to apply appropriate performance improvement tools.

Because of the gold finish, the ACOE Awards presented the SDARNG with \$100,000 to enhance the organization even further. The money will support process improvement, specifically supporting workforce professional development.



NATIONAL GUARD TO HOST 33RD ANNUAL GOLDEN COYOTE EXERCISE

The South Dakota National Guard will host its 33rd annual Golden Coyote training exercise in the Black Hills June 10-24, 2017, to provide military units with relevant training opportunities in support of overseas contingency operations and homeland defense.

Created in 1984 with the cooperation of the National Forest Service and Custer State Park, this year's exercise will allow about 2,400 service members to conduct combat-support and service-support missions in a realistic training environment and provide valuable services to the public.

There will be about 30 military units from 14 states and two foreign nations participating in the exercise from multiple branches of military service - Army, Navy and Air Force - working together to create an invaluable training experience. Participating units conduct military operations, train on their equipment and employ tactics, and complete various humanitarian missions and engineer projects that help improve the forest and infrastructure of many communities.



Local residents receive numerous benefits from the many engineer projects conducted during the exercise. Units transport timber to Native American communities that use it as firewood, conduct building construction, repair and upgrades, identify hazardous wilderness areas and make them safe for public use, and resurface local roadways that have fallen into disrepair.

Units participate in many training tasks and battle drills such as combat patrols, urban combat operations, land navigation, first aid, casualty evacuation and convoy operations. This provides a valuable opportunity for units to train on skills needed for any future overseas deployment.

Residents should be aware of an increase in military traffic throughout the region and in the communities of Rapid City, Hill City and Custer and can expect an increase in noise levels due to military training. Aircraft will be operating throughout the area and will respond to real-world emergencies during the exercise and remain in an all-hours-ready status. The public is asked to remain at a safe distance from all moving military vehicles and aircraft to prevent injury to personnel or damage to property.

SDDVA STAFF PARTICIPATE IN MEMORIAL DAY PROGRAMS THROUGHOUT THE STATE

This past weekend, staff from the South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs traveled to Watertown, Arlington, Mitchell, Faulkton, Beresford, Canton, and Alcester to participate in Memorial Day programs and to take a special opportunity to thank

our heroes across the state.

Our special thanks to all of our veterans service organizations for all their work in decorating the graves of our heroes and for their coordination of Memorial Day programs in their communities.



Field Officer Mike Maske and CVSO Susan Irons



Sec. Zimmerman visiting with veterans



Sec. Zimmerman visiting with veterans



Program Manager Bullerman in Mitchell



Field Officer Bowen



Sec. Zimmerman as keynote speaker



“OLD CRONIES” VISIT STATE VETERANS HOME

Last Saturday, the Old Cronies Motorcycle Organization thundered on their “Hogs” to the Michael J. Fitzmaurice State Veterans Home for their Annual “Memorial Weekend Veterans Run.”

The Old Cronies club is a group of friends that started not only a club, but a venue for motorcycle enthusiasts to ride together. The club is comprised of former veterans from all military branches and all war eras.

They never forget those who came before them and they are dedicated to remember those that paid the ultimate sacrifice. This team takes the time to visit one-on-one with our veterans at the Home and thank them for their service.



Their generosity and unwavering support for the State Veterans Home is greatly appreciated. The Old Cronies presented a donation of \$2,750 to the Mitchel J. Fitzmaurice State Veterans Home.

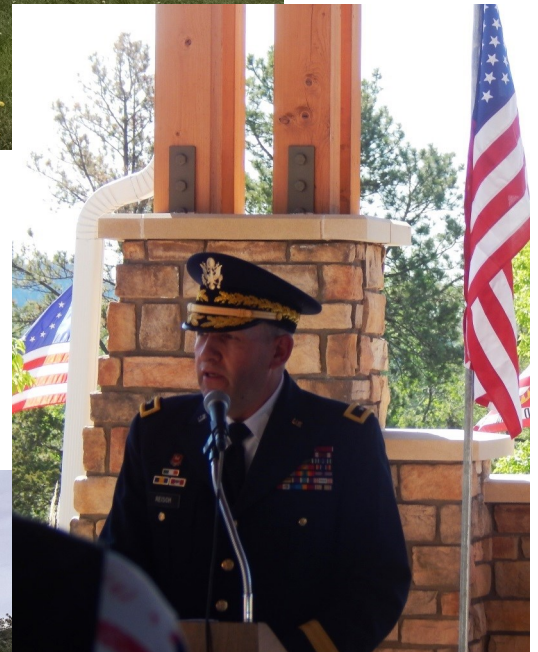
MEMORIAL DAY PROGRAM AT MJFSVH



Employees of the Michael J. Fitzmaurice State Veterans Home, family members and volunteers gathered on Friday to place flags and pennies at each of the graves in the State Veterans Cemetery. Col-

lectively, this team placed 800 flags and pennies in less than 20 minutes.

The annual Memorial Day program at the Home was held on Monday morning with Major General Tim Reisch, adjutant general of the South Dakota National Guard serving as the keynote speaker.



Maj. Gen. Tim Reisch



Upcoming Events

Jun 10—SD Marine Corps League Annual Meeting—Pierre Post 8 (520 W. Pierre Street) - 10:00 am (CT)
Jun 14—US Dept of Veterans Affairs Call Center Grand Opening—Hot Springs Campus—10:00 am (MT)
Jun 15-18—SD American Legion State Conference—Watertown—Ramkota
Jun 22-25—State VFW Convention—Pierre—Ramkota
Jun 28—Black Hills Veterans Job Fair—Western Dakota Tech
Jul 14—VABHHCS VSO Congressional Forum—Building 145—Room 108—Fort Meade—10:00 am (MT)
Aug 14-17—SDDVA Annual Benefits School—Pierre—Ramkota
Aug 31—Veterans Day at the South Dakota State Fair
Sept 11—VA Black Hills Mental Health Summit

Audry Ricketts, Public Information Officer
South Dakota Department of the Military <http://military.sd.gov>
South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs <http://vetaffairs.sd.gov>
Soldiers and Sailors Building - 425 E Capitol Avenue
Pierre, SD 57501
Phone: 605-773-8242
E-mail address: audry.ricketts@state.sd.us

